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A N  
ADDRESS to the PUBLIC.  
O N  
TRUE REPRESENTATION  
AND  
THE UNITY OF MAN.

Being the substance of a Speech, delivered at the  
FREE MASONS LODGE, in SHEFFIELD.  
*On Monday February 27th. 1792.*

By BENJAMIN DAMM, *K*  
A MEMBER of the CONSTITUTIONAL SOCIETY.

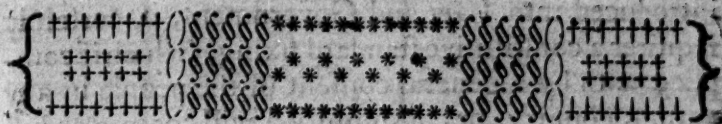
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TOGETHER WITH  
A RHAPSODY TO E----- B----- Esq.  
By J. SHARPE.  
Ornamented with a humorous Print, of  
"THE SWINISH MULTITUDE."

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## ADDRESS &c.



H A T are the Rights of Man as he standeth in Civil Society, and upon what are these rights founded?

The Rights of Man in civil Society, or politically considered, are both *to govern*, and *be governed*; to assist government in a social capacity, and be assisted by it.

But take notice by the way, it is not here intended, that every Member of a community is to be a governor, or take an actual part in legislating for his country: *by no means*; Neither on the other hand is it implied, that any man should be exempt from the office of serving society, his countrymen, in quality of legislator, *who has suitable abilities for the work: no such thing*; But whoever shall be thought fit to prescribe good and wholesome laws, for the people at large, and what are feasible duly to fulfill and practise, may be admitted into the number of *governing patriots*: however indigent and despicable they may be in outward circumstances; *That is*, if a sufficient body of persons, or *majority*, who are thoroughly acquainted with his character, *shall so resolve, and please to appoint him to that station; provided they are willing to support him in it: and he, in his turn be equally inclined to serve his country and his friends.*

Now because distrests of nations, and the grievances of mankind, are despotism, and arbitrary power,



introduced into Law and Government, it certainly requires a constitutive standard fixing, (which if complied with by a general consent of the people in any nation, country, or community,) will contain as just and perfect a plan of Election and Representation as its best, and wisest inhabitants can furnish, (previous to the passing of Laws, or establishing any office for their execution,) such as the qualifications of Electors, the number, authority, duration, session, restriction, dismissal, and the like, of the representative department together with the mode of taxation to be pursued by them, and what payment is due to those whose time and talents shall be so well employed, all of which, with other useful documents on the subject, are grounded so firmly, and discussed in a manner so apt, rational, and interesting, by that universal Philanthropist, *The Author on the Rights of Man*; as astonishes, whilst it instructs, and will be the deserved wonder of rising generations, and the admiration of every candid and impartial reader, thro' perpetual ages, perhaps to the end of time.

Yet it will ever be, both the duty and privilege of individuals, whether taking an active part in government or otherwise, to pay his proportionate quota to its support, in order to carry its good and salutary laws into execution, that none may be oppressed by any necessary charge it will incur, and that every one indiscriminately, may reap the benefit of its real security and protection, in the preservation of life, liberty, and property, the true essential rights, to which every man is alike duly entitled, be of what nation, complexion, or family soever he will.

But not to confound one thing with another, as well as to pave the way to a more able and requisite discussion, of ensuing particulars, before we proceed further it will be requisite in the next place, to take



*some notice of the ground of all our rights, whether civil, or religious; in order to discover how they spring from their own genuine root, like the branches of a tree out of its stem, or trunk; or as the circumference of a circle from its own proper center.*

Observe then, my dear friends, and fellow citizens, *and mark it well*, that man himself is the entire subject, basis, or foundation, from whom every right, sacred, or temporary, must have their necessary origin: and on him they must totally and ultimately devolve. For as that *Celebrated Author, and Unanswerable Politician*, Mr. THOMAS PAINE has most judiciously remarked in treating of these matters, "Every Civil Right (says he,) grows out of some Natural Right," so that his public and political claim, *wholly, that is, the very being of all civil, and acquired rights, are clearly consequent, on those he has personally and by nature.*

To ascertain then the truth of these propositions and shew the just claims, and equitable Rights of Men, by taking them comparatively amongst themselves: It is meet to consider the natural endowments, and personal qualifications, of which every man is possessed.

First of all then, every man retains, or has a mind, a will, or an understanding, and a principle of discernment, and discrimination in himself, he is likewise possessed of a similar train of passions, and affections, together with a faculty of retention, or memory, each of which have the same office, and orderly manner of working, in one man as another, unless violently controuled from without, or voluntarily contracted within; add to these, that every individual of mankind, in a sound and regular state of nature, has the same senses, which are virtually one, in use, name, and number; and there-

fore it is, that they always must and do depend upon the same organs of sensation, and have the same arrangement, place, and construction, thro' the whole species. Or if you take men anatomically you will find them exactly similar thro' every part of the corporeal system, internal, and external, and that each distinct part, member, joint, or limb, hath a like service to accomplish, and doth actually perform the same movements throughout the human race.

And lastly to compleat the account, you will do well to remember, that mankind collectively, however diversified, by time, place, or circumstance, *have still but one identity in substance, and blood*, seeing all our beings are derived from the same common parent, according to which we read, all nations were made of one blood to dwell on all the face of the earth. This refers us to that root, or center spoken of before, from whence every branch of human posterity and the whole circumferencial offsprings of the rational world, are palpably and visibly descended.

How plain then it must appear, from what goes immediately before, that there can be no disparity, in person, family, or blood, throughout the great brotherhood of man: then why is so vast a difference made amongst men, at the present day, both in titles, and the appropriation of the goods, and fruits of the earth which, (exclusive of private property justly obtained) was originally intended for the general use and benefit of all? For if mankind do all consist of one mass, are all produced or made up of one lump, and are perfectly homogeneous in so great a degree, and so many respects, as already enumerated; then it is not ten thousand removes can make them less related to each other than at first, when there was but one family in the world, whereof one half were parents, the other brethren, in immediate succession.

For as a wise man has learnedly observed, with great reason and perspicuity, "*Children are but a part of the Parent wrapt up in another skin,*" and what is more simple to conceive, than that these two relative characters, *that is to say, Parents, and Children, comprise all the rational inhabitants of the earth?* Here the great chain of common brotherhood may be literally seen, and evidently understood, as indissolubly compleat, and running in a positive course, through the intire family of the world, as well in nature as in name. Neither is it in the power of human pride, aided by every infernal contrivance, to break the real connexion, or loosen the cohesive cement, *on the ground of Truth, and sound Philosophy,* however men may attempt it, by the use of craft, and extraneous manners. Here then, the question will again recur, Why is one of this great fraternity distinguished by the ostentatious title of *Duke, Earl, Lord, Count, &c.* with the superaddition of the epithet of *Noble*, prefacing the grand appellation? Whilst another who is perfectly useful to society, with his utmost industry and oeconomy, is still branded with the odious and degrading term of *vulgar, common, peasant, and the like;* Or if he receives the most trivial pittance from the Public, to eke out the burdensome charge of a numerous family, by way of relief he is instantly *stigmatized* with the opprobrious language of *pauper*, or if he craves a farthing at your hands, or asks a morsel of bread, he is thenceforward stiled *vagrant*, a term full as disgusting as that of a thief.

To allegorize then a little, my friends on these points it appears to me a parallel case with what we read in the prophets, where a man takes the stock of a tree, and makes a God on one part of it, which he actually worships and with the other part



he warms himself, or cooks his victuals; Nor is a more expressive simile devisable, than this before us, if we reflect but a moment how differently these two orders of men are treated, and employed; who like the tree here alluded to, are both derived from one common stock.

First then, *the high titled man*, as he can shew no native, or personal superiority, over his equal brother the labourer or mechanic, must have recourse to *art and parade alone*, unto which he is entirely indebted; for all that is to distinguish him, from the lowest and meanest of his fellow creatures: There being no other means existing, whereon to establish such species of domestic pride, in family, or in blood; Nor can the most abandoned, audacious mortal, produce a better proof of his greatness, no; not even in appearance, as is amply demonstrated, in the preceding part of these self evident remarks.

And because such an exterior shew, is all the shift he has to climb above his brethren; he accordingly flashes upon the world, in *Clothes* embroidered with *gold, & silver*, in his *star, garter, brilliants, and blue ribband*, his equipage, and pompous train of numerous attendants, and idle domestics; his daily table of *luxurious expensive meats, and costly wines*; a profusion of charge and glare, in house, and furniture, besides an useless and uncommon number of horses and dogs, with every other extravagance & superfluity of life; supposing (at the same time) he is no gambler, dissipated profligate, or libertine, in the pursuit of obscene and lustful pleasures; *which can hardly be imagined*, as it is but too often the case with persons who live in riot and excess, and want neither *leisure nor abundance*, to fulfil their base and wanton desires.

From hence we conclude, it must be altogether owing to the making appearances quadrate with the

false and lofty titles, that such vile and enormous precedents, meet with *so much encouragement prevail above all things, and are pursued with such avidity in the world.*

Now tho' it is plain, that titles as considered in themselves, are perfectly insignificant, and in their application, no more than toys for children; yet seeing that in respect of their *high sounding tone*, they are made use of, and adopted for maxims of *true grandeur and nobility*, they not only mark a kind of foppery in the rational being which degrades its dignity; *as Mr. Paine observes*, but upon a candid and deliberate investigation you will find them most seriously pernicious, virulent, and banefully influential, in the consequence: for mistaking the ground of all that is either *greater good in man*; their whole endeavour is, *by false and spurious motives*, to make as splendid shew in meer outward figure, and appearance only, that shall by its extraordinary decorations, substitute the place of *character and real worth*.

Nor is it in the least to be doubted, that a general corruption of morals, and depravity of manners, is, in a great measure owing to these extravagant examples of luxury and dissipation, which as they have *a natural tendency to excite the same propensity in others with those that give such destructive instances to the world*, it will necessarily follow, that thro' imitation of these profuse, and monstrous examples, men of inferior fortunes have almost deluged the land with swindling and bankruptcy, and every kind of fraud, and violence, practised by designing villains, not only on the heedless and unwary; but likewise *on the careful, sober, honest, and industrious tradesman*; to his own undoing, and the total ruin of his once happy, but now disconsolate family.

But the most prominent and highly aggravated feature, in this picture, discovers itself in the predominant power of these men, who by uniting title with riches, obtain an influence *that glaringly preponderates*, in the scale of their own interest & in designs, *notoriously selfish, and base*, so that like a vortex, the great mass of the people, and the unresisting multitude of *Tradesmen, Artizans, and Labourers*, are thereby drawn into mere vassalage, and intolerable, oppression, either in default of wisdom, or spirit, to assert their proper and necessary rights; for if these had once been conjoined with method and concord, in their numerous powers, duly disposed (as in the Fable of Bundled Sticks,) *to be of consequence, know their own importance, or feel their own weight by union*; it never could have been in the power of such an extraneous cast of men, which nature in its pure simplicity knows nothing of, as being strangers to humanity, religion, and conscience, and on whose high nominal titles, the lapsed state of man, not only puts a *peculiar negative*, but likewise pours *the utmost contempt*: I say it never could have been in the power of these men, to construct Laws, and intrude them upon the public, the most generally abusive in their sensible effects, or oppressive in operation, besides humiliating, and insulting, that human nature can possibly lie under: that is, the, constraining a person who has his daily bread to buy and who must make the purchase with the sweat of his brow, to pay tax and tribute to those who shall cause a part of that very bread to be taken from him; on purpose that he may pay, perhaps, a double price, or more; for what shall now remain, or is then left behind.

This is intended to *augment*, and keep up the *land-god interest*, without which artifice, it could not be done



To this stratagem alone must be attributed the general increase in the price of provisions, so that not only cattle and flesh of every kind, including butter and cheese, but fossils, as lead ore, & lime-stone, dug out of the bowels of the earth, with brick of common clay, have all, and each them, in less than 30 years backward equivalent to the racking of rents, advanced in a duplicate proportion, yea, many of them above a double ratio, to what their statement were before that period.

Thus, by looking well at this one stroke of policy, wholly founded on *self interest*, falling on all the *essential articles of life, with such ponderous and impressive weight*; we see the far greater part of a kingdom, loaded with a burden, that at once supercedes the enormous charge of all our accumulated taxes; this if previously examined, and duly digested, will perfectly reveal unto us the virtues belonging these great nominal descriptions, whereby we shall easily become proper judges, as well, of the merit or benefit due to titles, as of the efficacy of that legislation which places its family ground, & sets its hereditary footing upon them. and certainly every one not totally enveloped in gross ignorance, or otherwise warped by self interest, and consequently by prejudice, must see and acknowledge, that wealth, crowned by title, is strictly and literally the same despotic source, that in government, actually exercises itself, like the primary movement in an ill constructed machine, which agitates the whole apparatus of working powers that follow after, in such a manner as to tear & pull in pieces, all the inferior parts that depend upon it: thus by the tyrannical influence, and arbitrary measures of this legislative authority, is the equitable and universal laws of nature, of religion, and sound policy, not barely infringed, but even dislocated, which were

primarily ordained, to connect, harmonize and establish mankind into a socially, endearing, peaceful, and happy brotherhood.

Likewise that very partial & arbitrary law which admits no person, but such as holds the tenure of a manor, or possessors of an hundred pounds per annum, to kill, or take to themselves, *animals, perfectly wild by nature*, is a bale imposition, not to say insult, upon the public, and doth as openly militate against its common interest.

Especially, if we reflect that these prohibited creatures, are the daily food, and lawful prey of *Foxes, Pole-cats, Kites, Hawks, &c.* whilst millions of men are denied all access to them, or participation thereof, but what comes thro' the hands of these monopolizers, as a peculiar favour, whence it necessarily follows, that this illiberal act proceeds from the same despotic fountain, as those other merciless and oppressive laws, that so notoriously enhance the price of provisions.

Nor can any person of integrity and ingenuity, view, but with abhorrence, and utter detestation, that superfluous number of places, and pensions, paid out of industrious labour, and the hard earnings of the poor, for the meer purpose of aggrandizement and luxury, that is, to support a set of idle and useless beings, favourites of a court, in splendour, riot, and all manner of wanton extravagance, whilst the obvious fund that supplies this channel, is the sweat & blood of the great multitude, the bulk or mass of the nation, whose distresses are shockingly evident, & too sensibly discovered in the *chasm* of their *real & indispensibly necessary wants*. Now as many of these pensions, and pecuniary grants, are very highly rated and the assemblage of them so numerous, the aggregate sum must be enormous. Mean time the services annexed, bearing no proportion to the annual amount,

This brings the ~~the~~ partly full in prospect, whom we all know, are either titled persons; or in the high road so to be: by whose procuring cause it is these rich places, and wealthy livings, are almost generally conferred, either on their own relations, as needy dependants, or creatures still more capable, of supporting their conduct; and forwarding their designs, which however *sinister in quality, or inimical to the public welfare*, are sure to meet with particular aid and assistance, *from such mercenary advocates as these*. And thus it is, that unsufferable burdens are brought upon an helpless people. *The which divine providence may soon relax, is the ardent and sincere wish of the author.*

Hence we shall infer, that both titles, and riches apart, or seperately considered, are too impotent to give nobility, since in a variety of instances, where united together, we see them fall visibly short of common justice, and in some cases, divested even of humanity. And with regard to titles themselves, we know them to be only *a man made phantom*, created as fancy or interest directs, just in a similar way to the Pope's creation of *cardinals, abbots, monks &c.* down to the lowest, or *jesuitical class*, with no distinction but ceremony and parade alone. All which attentively observed, amounts to a full and demonstrate proof, that titles, are utterly *unchristian, or irreligious*, as being *quite vague, irrational, and unnatural* in our present frame of existence, & consequently have their *entire order and origin grounded in human pride* backed by *sophisticated policy, and diabolical craft*.

And that this may not appear to be the fruit of malevolence, or suspended on my own judgement conjecture, or authority, hear what is said in the Poem intituled, *The True born Englishman*.



" The great invading *Norman* let us know,  
 " What *Conquerors* in after times might do;  
 " To every *Musketeer* he brought to town,  
 " He gave the lands that never were his own.  
 " When first the English Crown he did obtain,  
 " He did not send his *Dutchmen* home again;  
 " No re-assumptions in his reign were known,  
 " D'Av'nant might there have let his book alone  
 " No parliament his army could disband,  
 " He rais'd no money for he paid in land.  
 " He gave his Legions their eternal station,  
 " And made them all freeholders of the nation:  
 " He canton'd out the country to his men,  
 " And every soldier was a denizen.  
 " The rascals thus enrich'd he call'd them Lords  
 " To please their upstart pride with newmade words  
 " And Doomsday-book his tyranny records.

This shews at least, how tyranny, and arbitrary power were introduced and established on a military foundation, *at so early a period of time*, as well as the despotic motive and end of *applying titles*; and the cause and effect must be still the same; the continuance of matters of this kind, never abating either their use or energy on any account.

From these premises, then, it must be manifest, even to those who are yet tenaciously enamoured of the *baby clothes of Count or Duke*; that principles with their consequent ill effects, *not persons*: are the genuine objects of these strictures: For whilst the fate of a Ferrers is still recent in memory, the example of whom a poor man of honest heart would shudder at imitating, we may adopt the Language of Mr. Pope, in his *Essay on Man*, with the greatest propriety.

- " Behold the child by natures kindly law,  
 " *Pleas'd with a rattle, tickled with a straw;*  
 " *Stars, Garters, Gold, assume his riper stage.*  
 " *As Beads, and Prayer-Books are the Toys of age.*  
 " Then look about and see where greatness lies,  
 " Only amongst the Heroes and the wise,  
 " Heroes the same, the thing is now agreed,  
 " From *Macedonian* madman to the *Swede*.  
 " If by your father's worth your own you rate;  
 " Count me those only that are *good and great*:  
 " What can ennoble *slaves* and *sots* and *cowards*,  
 " Alas! Not all the blood of all the *Howards*.  
 " *A Wit's* a feather and a *Chief's* a Rod,  
 " *An Honest Man's* the *Noblest Work of God*.

THE END.